THEOLOGY

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PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

Niebuhr, the Dialectical Moralist - - V. A. *Demant*

Good Mrs Trimmer - - - - *W. K. Lowther Clarke*

Book Reviews by Dr J. K. Mozley, Canon H. Balmforth, Brother George Every, S.S.M., etc.

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PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

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Niebuhr, the Dialectical Moralist

THE second volume of Reinhold Niebuhr's Gifford Lectures is entitled *Human Destiny*.[1] It is in fact a superb study of the meaning of history in the light of the paradoxical nature of the moral problem as posited and enlightened by the Christian revelation. Since Karl Barth's deft explanation that he could serve the study of Natural Theology by denying its validity and so stimulate its adherents, it has apparently not been found advisable that a Gifford Lecturer should come to terms with the trust deeds. Otherwise Niebuhr, too, would have had a pretty problem. It is tempting to speculate how he would have dealt with it. For he not only demonstrates that all anthropological and religious interpretations of history which dispense with belief in Christ the Messiah as revealing the power and love of God, fail to give history a meaning. He starts by dividing such interpretations into those which do not, and those which do, expect a Christ, and derives from the latter his principles of analysis. Niebuhr thus defiantly drives a coach and horse through the idea of a Natural Theology at the disposal of man as man, and does not even have to mention the fact. An interesting sign of the theological times !

This is a book of outstanding power, intellectual spirituality and pungent maturity throughout. It is in the four opening chapters on what Messianism does for an understanding of history, and what the Christian Messianism, with its centre in the Atonement, means for man in history, that Niebuhr now makes his most positive contribution. Where a Christ is not expected, man's life is either reduced to the meaningless process of the natural order, or history is emptied of meaning by human existence finding its interpretation out of history, in eternity. Where a Christ is expected there are two possibilities which Christ did not fulfil: a political messianism, which implies the impossible combination of the divine and historical in a ruler of supreme goodness and power; and a prophetic messianism which envisages a permanent court of pure ethical righteousness without pretensions, to judge, correct and perfect history. Jesus fulfilled a Messianism of a kind not expected, by assuming the rôle of the "suffering servant" triumphing over evil, not by the destruction of evil doers, but by His own bearing of it. This is the divine action *in* history. He also fulfils the rôle of the "Son of Man" who gives to history a meaning derived from its completion beyond history. This is the relevance for history of the transcendent source of meaning and of the eschatology of the Gospel.

Such a Christ is "foolishness in the sense that experience does not

[1] *The Nature and Destiny of Man.* By Reinhold Niebuhr. Volume II. *Human Destiny.* (Nisbet, 15s.)

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lead us to expect or anticipate the answer which it makes to the ethical problem." But it is "wisdom to them that are called" in the sense that, once accepted, it becomes an adequate principle for interpreting the ethical problem in history. So, for the believer, the grace of God which is by Jesus Christ is on the one hand a power of God in man which completes his incompleteness, and, on the other hand, the merciful power of God over man, whereby sin is overcome by God's mercy, but not by human goodness. I hope this crude summary of the first four chapters will certainly send readers to Niebuhr's full treatment of the Atonement, which I believe constitutes an indispensable present stage in recovering the full force of the doctrine.

Before I deal with the central chapters (V to VIII), which analyze the history of doctrines of grace and their effects, about which I am inclined to be more controversial, I want to call attention to the penultimate chapter (IX), in which will be found Niebuhr's most developed thought on the relation of the Kingdom of God and the struggle for justice. Here he clarifies much that has puzzled readers of his repeated return to the problem, and he lays renewed emphasis on the dialectical contact and contrast between love and justice, which is so grossly obscured still in "social applications" of Christianity; which is seen and often appreciated by the more theological of our religious leaders here in England when they are talking to theologians, and is then mysteriously left behind in the taxi when the ecclesiastic addresses a public meeting.

This section contains valuable warning for those who are seeking to overcome world anarchy by centralized world government. Niebuhr's thesis that all human justice contains elements of injustice might be fruitfully compared with Berdyaev's treatment of the same theme in his *Human Destiny, an Essay in Paradoxical Ethics.*

I also want to say that perhaps the last chapter might well be read first, for like Dante's *Commedia* the key to the whole lies in the conclusion; it all hangs from what is there described. It is also in this last chapter of Niebuhr's that he relates man's historical destiny to his eternal state. It is a pity that the subject matter of this chapter had to be contracted for the book, and I hope that Niebuhr's fuller treatment will appear in print, developing the contribution he makes in this volume and in the last sermon of *Beyond Tragedy.* The theme is the end of history in terms of the Biblical concepts of Parousia, Last Judgment and Resurrection, the content of which can only be illuminated in the light of faith. But, in that light, eternity is seen as standing over time and touching it, on the one hand, and at the end of time, fulfilling it, on the other. The individual lives in active relation both to eternity and to the historic process and finds his meaning lost with either alone. History itself is not redemptive, for Antichrist is there and grows in power till the *finis.* But history is significant, for Christ will return as its judge at the end (*telos*).

Throughout, Niebuhr displays his consummate grasp of the central ethical problem of man, as disclosed both by the secular movements of human thought and action and by the religious teachings which have handled it. There is no major issue of politics or of the human

crisis represented by the present war which is not illuminated by his Biblical theology. And the treatment is always dialectical. This Biblical truth about man cannot be stated with an "either—or" and a choice between them. The living reality of man's existence can only be set in terms of a relation to God, which in human terms becomes always a "both—and" statement containing what appear intellectually as contradictories. But that is only because reality is not so rational as our intelligence, or to put it another way, existence contains more than thought; or still again, while the reason is an activity of man's spirit it it not its centre.

This volume performs two great services for a theological understanding of our human existence, or rather for theology as the key to that existence. The first is the deepened perception Niebuhr gives us of the Bible view of man, such as I have indicated in the previous paragraphs. This earlier part closes with a clarifying description of the Pauline doctrine of grace in Chapter IV. The grace of God through Christ is both the power of God not our own, which sanctifies, and also the forgiveness of our sins, which justifies.

Then comes the set of four chapters which analyze the history of views, theological and secular, which fall into two groups corresponding to one or other of these soteriological conceptions. It is here that Niebuhr makes his second great contribution, that of interpreting the religious situation of our own day and its needs, in the light of these two views which are dialectically complementary but which cannot logically come under one formula. In their theological setting these are the idea of salvation as power of righteousness in man and the idea of salvation as pardon for unrighteousness which man can never overcome. The same basic attitudes take secular forms in liberal optimism and cynical pessimism about the meaning of history. These attitudes are traced, in their Christian clothing, with much illuminating comment, through the Apostolic Age and in Augustine, where they inter-work in the same mind, leading to what Niebuhr calls the medieval synthesis. Thereafter they split apart into two movements represented by the Renaissance and the Reformation. These two movements contain insights into man's existence which the medieval Christianity ignored; and it therefore disintegrated. But the Renaissance and the Reformation each neglect an integral element represented in the other, and for this neglect it falsifies the real human situation. While Catholicism holds both the truth of *Christus in nobis* and that of *Christus pro nobis*, it compounds too simply the divine action and human achievement. The Renaissance represents a doctrine of human self-sufficiency without the need of grace, and where it touches the Christian tradition at all it is a kind of secularized version of an exclusive belief in sanctification. The Reformation, insisting upon the second truth and by its almost exclusive interest in "justification," makes for indifference to historical issues and minimizes the Christian importance of relative judgments within a sinful world.

This section of the book is full of material for a constructive assessment of the Christian and secular situation today. It must be read in full. It leads up to an historical diagnosis and a statement of the task

ahead. The diagnosis is that what was false in the Renaissance view has overcome what was true in the Reformation insight. The task is that of producing a synthesis of what was true in both. I am sure that Niebuhr is right both in the diagnosis and of the nature of the task. But I think he has got some of his perspectives wrong, as he modestly allows in his preface that he might have done. I will now address myself to these two points.

Nietzsche, like Niebuhr, regarded the Renaissance as a threat to Christianity, but he wanted it to succeed. He hated the Reformation for countering this threat and for reinstating the Church, as he thought, first directly, by resurrecting the Pauline attack on *noble* values, and then by provoking the Counter-Reformation. "The Renaissance thus becomes an event without a meaning, a great *in vain*." Niebuhr holds, on the other hand, that the Renaissance vanquished the Reformation and regards this as a calamity. Both Reformation and Renaissance have insights into the human soul which were lacking in the earlier Christian understanding, and his question is the two-fold one, why the Reformation insights were lost so quickly, and how the truths of each movement can be woven into a living whole for the present and future.

By stating the modern Christian situation in this form, as a dialectical problem between Renaissance and Reformation, he sets it in a truer perspective than did Archbishop William Temple, who stated it in terms of the ancient and medieval scheme as the thesis, and the modern (including the Reformation and Renaissance) as the antithesis.[1] Both writers are aware that the period commonly called Modern is now reaching its natural term, and that the next phase will represent a synthesis. Temple takes two periods as his thesis and antithesis, and is interested mainly in the former's conception of order and the latter's concern for freedom. Niebuhr, looking more deeply, sees the opposition between the two elements in the modern period of religious thought and attitude, and recognizes them as "partly contradictory historical forces, released by the disintegration of the medieval synthesis" (p. 155).

How right he is here is best illustrated by the utter confusion of the religious situation in Britain and America, and I gather, also, in many parts of the world where the Anglican and Protestant Churches have a large hold. It is only in the continent of Europe that the Reformation emphasis is still clearly held to be threatened by Renaissance humanism. Elsewhere, the dwindling Reformation stalwarts and the Churches invaded by liberal outlooks are both parties supposed to be wearing the same Protestant hat. Niebuhr's analysis shows conclusively that they are fundamentally opposed to each other. And it might be added that if one made in one column the points on which Catholicism stands in contrast to Reformation ones, and gave them a secularized terminology, and in a second column the points of a doctrine of man on which the Reformation contradicts the Catholic view, then the average modern Anglo-Saxon Christian, if shown the

[1] *Nature, Man and God*, p. 80, *cf.* pp. 332 and 405. Gifford Lectures, 1932-4.

two columns (without their headings), will say that he holds the first lot and that he is a Protestant!

A more concentrated and pathetic example of the confusion was exemplified in the address to the A.E.G.M. 1944, where the President adumbrated a Liberal Evangelicalism which would combine what was true in "Thomism" and "Barthianism."[1] But Liberal Christianity is just what becomes of the other half of Thomism when it is cut away from that half representing the contradiction between man and God, upon which Barth lays all the stress.

A further aspect of the same confusion is to be seen in most of the outlooks behind reunion proposals, religious education, and religion and life. While Catholicism and Reformation talked about the same things and often gave conflicting accounts of them—salvation, grace, justification—the modern liberal Christian world is not talking about these things at all. It stands for extraneous Renaissance assumptions about man, and employs a tamed biblical and Church terminology to expound its aims for the good life of man and society, and to urge men to make "sacrifices" in pursuit of those aims. Elsewhere disillusion with this moral and rationalist humanism has given place to a pessimistic reversion to pure force and irrational apotheosis of the deed. The natural religion of English Society struggling to plan democracy[2]—with its impulse towards a merger religion of the Churches, its concern for non-denominational religious basis in education, and the Pelagian optimism of much in the *Religion and Life* movement—is the liberal counterpart of Hitler's *Deutsche Christentum*, both these representing religious phases of the disintegration of the Renaissance. No wonder Niebuhr has to conclude that " the confusion is so great partly because modern culture has no alternative perspectives upon life and history to which it might turn. No alternative perspectives are available because the triumph of the Renaissance was so complete that it destroyed not only particular interpretations of the Christian religion, but submerged the Christian religion itself, as, in any sense, a potent force in modern culture" (p. 189). His analysis shows that liberal Christianity is but a religiously tinged version of the Renaissance hope; and that therefore its very idealisms, far from providing a way of renewal, are hastening the disintegration.

Now this analysis, as I have sketched it with some applications of my own, I wholly endorse. Niebuhr's account of how things have happened in this way is so important for seeing what is involved in a renewed synthesis of Reformation and Renaissance insights that, with great profit derived and admiration given, I venture to suggest some modifications of his explanation of the religious factors in this historical development.

If he read Niebuhr's fine summary (p. 211) of the dialectical affirmations required for such renewal, without knowing the context

[1] Presidential address to London Federation of the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement, by the Rev. R. R. Williams. Reported in *The Guardian*, June 25, 1943.

[2] *Cf.* H. Ehrenberg, *Autobiography of a German Pastor*, where he speaks of "the self-complacent ideal of the good life which the Englishman champions, and which ignores and therefore undermines the Christian struggle against the world."

in which Niebuhr had set it, the historian of Christian thought would say: this is a description of the Catholic two-step scheme. If, then, he learned from Niebuhr that within Catholicism there are to be found illusions that human insecurity and sinfulness can be completely transcended in history; further, that the same illusions are to be found in more radical and unbalanced form in Reformation developments, once justification is regarded as the *esse* of salvation, and in Renaissance humanist perfectionism, a question would then arise. If the medieval-Catholic synthesis arrested the full development of each aspect of the Christian paradox of grace (p. 215), could that full development have been made, and can it be made in any other way than by the split into two completely independent and rival religions? If it could, is not the present alternative a recovery of Catholicism purged of the errors which historically it has shared with its successors. There are difficulties about both these conditional answers, and Niebuhr has given enough serious grounds for not minimizing them. But there are some defects in his treatment, which explain why he has not named the synthesis he calls for by the name of Catholicism.

For one thing—and this may be extenuated in any one who sets out to clarify complex historical movements—Niebuhr tends to push and pull his material a little for the sake of concise intellectual formulations. It leads him, for example, in two matters of detail to error. It so fits his case to say that Aquinas should regard the Incarnation as provided for, apart from the Fall of Man, that he makes him say this, by quoting from the Objection which says it, and which St Thomas puts down as an error to be answered.[1] Then (on p. 148) he takes the phrase *societas perfecta* as implying a morally perfect society with which, in his view, the Church is identified in post-Augustinian Catholicism. But *societas perfecta* is used as much of the State as of the Church in the later Middle Ages and signifies not moral perfection, but independence, "containing within itself all means sufficient for its support."[2] These are trifles, but they convey a suspicion that Niebuhr often forces his perspectives.

I think he gets a misleading impression of the extent to which Catholic Christianity ignores the persistence of sinfulness in the redeemed, for lack of deep acquaintance with the literature of Catholic spirituality. While he acknowledges that Augustine and, to a lesser degree, Aquinas and the Council of Trent preserve a balance between the two Pauline notes in the doctrine of grace, his quotations tell mostly of the Catholic emphasis upon sanctification. But throughout the history there are to be found the same emphases upon the need of the redeemed for God's mercy as appear so appealingly in, say, Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*.[3] To take but two examples, there is St Bernard's *Twelve Degrees of Pride*, addressed to his own monks; and there is, seven hundred years later, Father Faber writing upon "abiding sorrow for

[1] P. 81, footnote.

[2] *Cf.* article, "Societas Perfecta," Hastings, *Enc. Rel. and Ethics*; J. N. Figgis, *From Gerson to Grotius*, pp. 84, 208, 233. But see also F. C. Synge, "The Gospel in and through the Church," *The Presbyter*, October 1943, for difference between a Redeemed Community and a Community of the Redeemed.

[3] Especially II, i, 8, and CXVIII, xii, 3, on the unity of love and fear.

sin" and "the right view of our faults," and *not* about past, but the present sins of the redeemed.[1] "Again, when I do things which are outwardly right, nay, which are generous and involve some amount of sacrifice, I continually detect some low motive in them . . . self-love seems inseparable even from my very thoughts, my very sacrifices. It is not as if this happened now and then, but it is going on all day. It runs parallel with the stream of life."[2] Niebuhr, I think, could have penned that last sentence himself in answer to perfectionist illusions. Then, I cannot find that Niebuhr attaches any real meaning to sanctification at all. The nearest he gets to defining it is to say that it provides a growing sense of imperfection (p. 225), and an increasing sense of social obligation (p. 197). Nor is there any description of what is meant by overcoming sin "in principle" (p. 141 *ff.*), beyond that of recognizing the love of God as the only adequate motive of conduct and acknowledgment of the evil of self-love. "In action the power of self-love is mixed with the new power of the love of God which grace has established." Whatever of truth there may be in Niebuhr's contention that Catholicism subordinates justification to sanctification (a curious way of putting it, for it can be defended on that very ground), it seems that Niebuhr does not really distinguish between the power of sanctification and that of justification. By failure to do so he lowers the dialectical relation of the two, which he has done so much to illuminate.[3]

Now for the question to which all this leads up—the question of supreme importance for that form of Christianity, if any, which may provide the integrating power for a new epoch—the question why the Reformation insights were so quickly lost, and why the most active forces in Western civilization were informed by the Renaissance dogmas of the natural perfectibility of man. For us in the two Anglo-Saxon nations it includes the question why the Renaissance Pelagian humanism has invaded the Churches and rendered them quite incapable of interpreting the modern crisis or of leading the world out of it, for it is merely a religiously worded version of the world's own predicament.

There is a deep riddle here which it would be of great value to unravel. Niebuhr has stated it in a clearer way than has yet been attempted. But his explanation that the Reformation insights lost their force because they neglected the insights of the Renaissance is no real answer. Nor is this helped by pointing to the way in which the Reformation teaching on justification lead, both in the main traditions and in the sects, to a perfectionism more unqualified than within the Catholic ethos. That is part of the riddle. One is nearer the heart of the problem in Niebuhr's explanation that it provided no criteria of judgments and action in the relative sphere of morality and justice. If it is the temptation of Catholicism "to compound the relatives of politics and history with the ultimate sanctities," it is the inevitable consequence of Reformation views that these pretensions to ultimate

[1] *Growth in Holiness*, chapters xix and xx.
[2] Chapter xx.
[3] *Cf.* the full and careful study of "sanctification" texts in N.T. by Vincent Taylor, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, chapter v.

truth and finality find their way into secular living where there is nothing to check them, and through it into the religious quarters too. There is an inherent instability in the Reformation position, because it is an extreme position to which one of the elements in the full Christian tradition has been stretched. Its history discloses a psychic *enantiodromia* which jumps from the reverence which maintains its distance from God to a more unguarded safeguarding and exaltation of the self. Calvin and Bodin, Puritanism and Whiggery, were the twin ancestors of the modern world. They are the Jekyll and Hyde of Protestant man.

There is some light on this inevitable swing-over from authentic Reformation outlooks to its theological opposite, in both the words and problems of Kierkegaard. He sees something of it himself. "Luther set up the highest spiritual principle: pure inwardness. It may become so dangerous that we can sink to the lowest of lowest paganism . . . a point may be reached at which worldliness is honoured and highly valued as—piety. And this—as I maintain—cannot happen in Catholicism. Because Catholicism has the universal premise that we men are pretty well rascals. And why can it happen in Protestantism? Because the Protestant principle is related to a particular premise: a man who sits in the anguish of death, in fear and trembling and much tribulation—and of these there are not many in one generation."[1] But Kierkegaard is himself an example of Reformation spirituality turning *in extremis* into the very thing it starts to combat. In, *e.g.*, *Training in Christianity* he pulled to its highest strain the truth of the utter creaturely dependence of man upon God. He tears away one by one everything that would draw men to the Saviour; there is left not the finest spider-thread by which the Creator has a pull upon the consciousness of the creature. The act of faith is induced by nothing which calls man out of himself; it becomes a choice the believer makes, dependent on nothing that comes to him. The teaching of utter dependence swings over to that of man's decision taken on no grounds whatever. It is an act of the unconditioned will. This result is an *epitome* of all teaching which rests upon the isolated *servium arbitrium*. It reverts to the opposite, the independent will.

This is a large theme, but even opening it up should indicate that a synthesis of Reformation and Renaissance such as Niebuhr adumbrates cannot be achieved by bringing together these two ends of the process, as it were. Each, originally and in intention, ministered to that truth of man which is denied by the other, but in their actual working out they have told in the same direction; and Reformation tendencies by their absolute negation of Christian criteria for history have given an impetus to secular perfectionism to a degree far outpassing the pretensions which might be attributed to the more sanguine doctrines of the Catholic Church.

There is one conclusion which I would draw from Niebuhr's expert marshalling of the dialectical factors in the moral task of Christian man, and from his most necessary and salutary insistence that harmo-

[1] *Journals*. Entry 1327.

nizations of the interacting forces of existence cannot be achieved in history or by any human formula or panacea. It is that the living synthesis of the two spiritual facts, represented by the two poles of the biblical doctrine of grace, cannot come about if it is sought for as a solution of the moral problem. It will be reached only after and through a period of faith and deep religiousness which does not start from the moral problem, but which seeks to penetrate again, and to learn of, the nature of divine and human existence from the revealed saving historical acts of God with men. Man cannot find God again, nor himself, by looking at the nature of his moral dilemmas. The Christian religion will enable its devotees to handle the moral problem once again only when it reverses the predominant trend of today, that is, when it derives its spirituality from a renewed *pietas* and from thence proceeds to remake its *ethos*.

V. A. Demant.

St Paul's.

Good Mrs Trimmer

Mrs Trimmer was once a household name. The children of the well-to-do were brought up on *The History of the Robins*; the poor on her school books. She appears in Byron's *Don Juan*,[1] and as "good Mrs Trimmer" as late as C. S. Calverley.[2] To those living today who have heard her name it suggests a very old-fashioned and almost absurd lady. The reality is quite different, nothing less than a heroine and saint.

Some Account of the Life and Writings of Mrs Trimmer (2 volumes, 1814) is a work which cannot be read without emotion. It consists in the main of extracts from her private Journal, kept during twenty-five years, in which she pours forth her soul in prayer. The contrast between the lucid, concise style of her books written for publication, with their mass of facts, and the monotonous, artless repetitions of the Journal is so marked that no thought of its publication can have crossed her mind.

Sarah Kirby (her maiden name) was born at Ipswich in 1741, her father Joshua being a teacher of art and a writer of repute in his day; the home was deeply religious. She went to an Ipswich boarding school, where she learned French thoroughly. When she was fourteen the family moved to London, her father having been appointed art teacher to the Prince of Wales, afterwards George III. She moved in literary and artistic circles, and Dr Johnson, Gainsborough, Hogarth, etc., were among her friends. Johnson was much struck by her when, at

[1] "In short, she was a walking calculator,
Miss Edgeworth's novels stepping from their covers,
Or Mrs Trimmer's books on education,
Or 'Coelebs' wife' set out in search of lovers." (I, xvi.)

[2] *Fly Leaves* (1866), "Lovers, and a Reflection" (of song birds):
"They need no parasols, no goloshes;
And good Mrs. Trimmer she feedeth them"—
suggested presumably by *The Robins*.

a gathering at Sir Joshua Reynolds' house, the talk turned on *Paradise Lost* and she produced a copy from her pocket. "He invited her the next day to his house, presented her with a copy of his Rambler, and afterwards treated her with great consideration" (*Life*, I, 9). She spent much of her time in reading and drawing, and used to help her only brother (she had no sister), who was at Westminster School, with his homework.

In 1759 her father went to live at Kew, where he had been appointed clerk of the works at the Palace. Here she met Mr Trimmer, who was two years older than herself, marrying him at the age of twenty-one, and setting up house at Brentford. Six boys and six girls were born of the marriage; nine of the children were alive when she died. Years of unremitting toil were her lot. She undertook the entire education of the family herself, except for the boys' classics, taught by a neighbouring clergyman, and devised a system by which the elder children instructed the younger. In the evenings, when Mr Trimmer returned from business, he would read aloud to the family—Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Addison, and the works of standard divines. Even at this period she visited the poor constantly, especially in sickness. Her physique must have been remarkable, for she sat up after the rest of the family had gone to bed, and rose at five, sometimes at four, even in severe winter weather, to get through her work at busy periods. The habit was formed before marriage, when she got up very early to learn poetry. She and a friend living on the opposite bank of the river used to vie with each other in early rising, hanging up white handkerchiefs in the bedroom windows as a sign that they were up.

Her career as an author began in 1780, when she started to put her instructions of the children into book form. The first volume of the *Sacred History* appeared in 1782, the work being eventually completed in six volumes. *Fabulous Histories*, afterwards called *The History of the Robins*, followed shortly afterwards. The Prayer Book and the Bible were explained in a number of books; *A Help to the Unlearned* commented on every chapter of the Bible. Her moral tales and school readers had a large circulation. Anticipating Charlotte Yonge's *Monthly Packet*, she was the sole author as well as editor of *The Family Magazine*, each number of which contained a sermon abridged from an Anglican divine, descriptions of foreign countries (pointing out how much worse off the poor were than in England), and instructive tales. *The Œconomy of Charity* (1786) dealt with the problems of Sunday Schools and, with her other books, helped to prepare the way for the foundation of the National Society. It was her conviction that the Charity Schools had become stereotyped in their methods and confined to a comparatively few children, so that new methods were required. The wonderful old lady, whose simplicity, modesty, intellectual ability and gentleness shine out in the biography and still more in the Journal, died in her chair in 1810.

The Journal has many entries describing the joy of Holy Communion. "Blessed Jesus, I am this day going to renew my baptismal vow at Thy holy table" (February 12, 1786). "I received the Sacrament on Christmas Day, but not with that fervour of devotion which

I hoped to feel. The next day I received it with a sick person, and since then at church again" (January 14, 1791).[1] In 1793: "The Lord's Supper . . . is a means, and a most blessed one, of repairing the breaches of a former covenant . . . everyone has repeatedly broken the covenant into which he entered by the Sacrament of Baptism, and cannot be restored to its privileges without having recourse to the other Sacrament for the renewal of them." In the same year: "If my life be spared I will try to bring the poor to the Sacrament."

It was her practice to retire for two or three hours on Sunday evening to be alone with her Journal. There are many confessions of failure to write it up owing to the increasing demands of the Sunday Schools. She was a friend and correspondent of Robert Raikes and Hannah More, and a pioneer of the movement in the London districts. In Hannah More's *Letters*, published in 1834, we have two charming references to her friend. January 1788, to her sister: "I carried good Mrs Trimmer there [the Bishop of Salisbury's—Shute Barrington] yesterday. The Bishop diverted us by saying he was between two very singular women, one who undertook to reform all the *poor*, and the other all the *great*; but he congratulated her on having the most hopeful subjects."[2] And May 1788, also to her sister: "Among my country excursions I must not omit dining with Mrs Trimmer and her twelve children at Brentford—a scene too of instruction and delight." In November 1786 Mrs Trimmer went to see the Queen to advise on the starting of Sunday Schools at Windsor, and letters arrived from all over the country asking for advice. "Thanksgivings a thousand times repeated, could not express the transports of my heart, which overflows with joy and gratitude when I reflect on the success of the Sunday Schools" (1786). The organization was a heavy responsibility. In many places the children had to be clothed by the efforts of charitable ladies. Mrs Trimmer's practice was to allow the parents 2d. in the 1s. for the cost of clothing.[3] The Master, who was generally paid, was assisted by voluntary teachers. Mrs Trimmer showed great interest in a spinning-wheel, to be bought for £5, by which eighteen children could spin at once. The Sunday School taught reading and handwork, besides religious knowledge, and with attendance at church took up most of the children's Sunday. In 1792 she refers to the great pecuniary loss caused her by the schools. A little later she seems to have had other losses, for she writes that the loss of property is to be met "by an increase of charity in every duty of religion, particularly in charity to the poor as far as my ability extends" (II, 72).

Mr Trimmer died in 1792 and for the rest of her life was mourned, but with a complete absence of the morbidity then fashionable, at

[1] Contrast the popular idea of Communion four times a year at this period.

[2] Miss More's *Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great* had just been published, making a furore.

[3] When I went to be Rector of a Suffolk village in 1908 the Sunday School children used to pay 1d. a week, sometimes more, and receive their contributions at the end of the year, plus 2d. in the 1s., in the form of a ticket on a shop, which allowed a further 2d. in the 1s. This may have gone back to Mrs. Trimmer's original impulse.

least among Evangelicals. In 1796 the widow revisited her birthplace at Ipswich and with special joy saw the font where she had been baptized. By this time she could write: "My family which receives the addition of three or four grandchildren every year, calls my attention in various ways." After her husband's death she seems to have moved to Ealing, where the task of starting Sunday Schools began over again. The Journal reveals her entering acutely into the joys and sorrows of her children, caring for the spiritual welfare of her maids, agonizing over lapsed Sunday School children, and, as if this were not enough, taking on other burdens. Thus she had to support a girl, the daughter of affluent parents, who had cast her off because of a marriage with a man of the working class, and with whom she pleaded in vain for reconciliation. The poor young woman, whose husband was out of work, eventually died, with her baby, as a result of privations. "How fatal are the consequences of disobedience! How destructive the unrelenting severity of offended parents!" wrote Mrs Trimmer in her Journal (II, 172).

With all her burdens, the note of joy predominated. The beauty of nature, pointing to the goodness of its Creator, was a continual source of thankfulness. Her humility and deference to Church authority are illustrated by an entry of February 5, 1793: "This is the day that is to determine the success of the plan I have formed for the improvement of the education of the poor; desirous as I am that it should be adopted by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, I feel at present very calm and easy about it, and I hope I shall continue to do so; the honour of my Saviour, and the good of the poor, are the sole ends I have in view." The decision was delayed, and not till June 19 did she record that the S.P.C.K. had adopted her books for Charity Schools.

The presupposition of all Mrs Trimmer's tales is the inevitability and rightness of class distinctions. It would be a quite unhistorical judgment to find fault with her for this. She wrote for the world as she knew it, a world in which there were multitudes of poor people living in squalor and ignorance, and in bad times in danger of starvation. At the other extreme there were the rich, largely profligate in their habits and unmindful of social responsibilities. The State did nothing for the education of the poor; it remained for the religious middle class to step into the breach and help them to be clean, moral, self-respecting, God-fearing. Right nobly they did their duty. There is no trace in Mrs Trimmer's writings of fear that in default of their efforts revolutionary outbreaks might occur which would sweep her and her class away. As her stories show, education did in favourable cases provide a ladder which might lead from the working class to the middle class. In the nineteenth century the habits of self-help and austere frugality learned in the hard school of the Napoleonic wars produced a virile and versatile nation able to take advantage of the opportunities of world-wide expansion. The social conscience then almost confined to Christians of the type of Mrs Trimmer and expressed in their heroic activities is now shown in the institutions of the State. The greatness of Victorian England, which grew out of an

extreme of social insecurity, is an established fact of history. If social security can be won the gain will be immense: what the corresponding loss will be, in freedom and individuality, will be for the historian of the future to assess. He may even judge that people like Mrs Trimmer were as great in their generation as are the famous social reformers of our day in theirs.

W. K. Lowther Clarke.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Doctrine of the Trinity: Croall Lectures, 1942-3. By Leonard Hodgson. Nisbet. 15s.

This is a most courageous, able, and valuable book. There are points, to which I shall refer, where I cannot follow Dr Hodgson; but the contribution that he has made to the study and exposition of dogmatic theology is one that may well cheer those who remember the richness of past Anglican work in this field and see not too many signs today of a comparable harvest. Not least is that true of the greatest of all subjects, the Christian doctrine of God who is the Holy Trinity.

"There is general agreement," says Dr Hodgson in the first lecture, "that the doctrine of the Trinity is a revealed doctrine." As to what "revealed doctrine" means there is no unanimity. Dr Hodgson, who is critical of the view that "God's revelation is given in the form of propositions," lays stress on "revelation in act," on the events which, as recorded in the New Testament, show us the action of God in the earthly life of our Lord and point to the doctrine of the Trinity as alone doing justice to the evidence both of Christ's sonship to the Father in the Spirit and of the Christian life which, being "in the Spirit," is found to reproduce "in each Christian the same way of life as was that of Christ on earth."

The effect of the first three lectures is to underline the New Testament setting of the doctrine and to make it plain that the tradition of Christian orthodoxy, for which the Spirit is "He," not "It," is alone truly harmonious with the New Testament data. Dr Hodgson's sureness of grasp as to this latter point, which reappears in his discussion of the Augustinian notion of the Spirit as *amor*, is clear and important in the highest degree. The next two lectures deal with Trinitarian Theology and with The Doctrine and Philosophy. In the former Dr Hodgson deals with the problem of unity. How is it that the doctrine of the Three Persons does not subvert the great truth of the unity of the Godhead? We know how Dr Rashdall answered that question, by maintaining that God is uni-personal, Power, Wisdom and Love, and claiming that this was the teaching of St Thomas Aquinas. Dr Hodgson totally rejects this way out, and devotes some pages in a later lecture to a criticism of Dr Rashdall, which might well have been more detailed. His own answer is by way of a discrimination between a mathematical unity and unities æsthetic and, more particularly, organic. Unity in the human self is not of the simple arithmetical order, while "according to the revelation of Himself

which God has given to us men in history there are three elements perfectly unified in the divine life, and each of these elements is itself a Person." It is in *Quicunque vult* that the full Christian doctrine of the co-eternity and co-equality of the Persons is to be found, a doctrine in which it is a profound mistake to see the perversion of the simplicity of Christian faith by the intrusion of Greek metaphysics. *Quicunque vult* points to a very different event: "the doctrine of the Trinity represents the intrusion into Greek metaphysics of a religious faith based on empirical evidence of divine revelation which the metaphysics of the time could not assimilate." In the lecture which treats specifically of the relation of the doctrine to philosophical speculation the conception of what is called "an internally constitutive unity" receives further consideration. Here, too, the value of the exposition is noteworthy, as is the capacity which Dr Hodgson shows for discriminating criticism, while he guards most carefully against the confusion that results when an idealist metaphysic concerning the relation of the Absolute and the world is taken as the philosophical and more adequate form of the relation between the divine Father and the divine Son. Of his criticism of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Gifford Lectures in their bearing upon this subject it is enough to say that it eminently deserves a reply. The sixth lecture takes us to St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, and John Calvin for their expositions of the doctrine, with further comments on the difficulties which have arisen when the unity of the Godhead that was stated and defended was assumed to be of a simple, mathematical kind. Finally, Dr Hodgson views the doctrine in its relation to Christian religion and life as essentially trinitarian. Very rightly he shows its value in precluding ideas which imply that the created universe is the centre of God's attention, though I wish he had not, by his quotation of them, given his approval to the lines which affirm that for this world, but not for others, "the Word of God is Christ," a statement which certainly cannot be proved and is open to grave objection. The book ends with a number of appendixes which include brief considerations of some modern views. Despite the evidence of the quotations he includes, I am very doubtful as to Dr Barth's trinitarian doctrine being a form of Sabellianism; Dr Hodgson does not use the word, but that is what his criticism implies. Dr Barth's remarkably convincing defence of the doctrine of the double procession, to which no allusion is made, hardly points that way. And I confess to considerable surprise that Dr Hodgson should regard Fr Thornton's book, *The Incarnate Lord*, as "the greatest theological work that has appeared in my lifetime." With all its power and independence it is, I suggest, too much involved with the character and implications of a particular philosophy for so high an order of merit to be assigned to it.

There are two major and closely allied subjects on which I cannot agree with Dr Hodgson. First, he seems to go too far in his reserve as to what may be said concerning the eternal life of God and the interrelations of the Persons. One may entirely approve of a refusal to speak as though anything like full knowledge were available for us. But the empirical evidence, as it comes to us through the biblical

revelation, does not, I would claim, leave us wholly in the dark when we refer to filiation and procession as realities of the divine life. This leads on to my second dissatisfaction: as I understand Dr Hodgson, he would deny altogether any *principium* of the Father in the Godhead and treat any belief therein as a relic of subordinationism, wrongly supposed *e.g.* by Calvin, as necessary for preserving the truth of the unity of God. Now it may well be that such a phrase as πηγὴ Θεότητος, applied to the Father, is open to the grave objection that it implies that, for His Godhead, the Son is dependent upon the Father. And Calvin's notion of a "primacy of 'ordo' and 'gradus' " may not be adequate. But that, in respect of the Persons, a *principium* belongs to the Father *qua* Father, because He is the Father, and the Son is the Son, does appear to me to be definitely the conclusion to which the New Testament points; while, *mutatis mutandis*, a similar result is reached concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit. Such a doctrine is neither inconsistent with the unity for which Dr Hodgson contends, nor does it imply the arithmetical unity against which, as relevant to the truth concerning the Godhead, he rightly argues.

What Dr Hodgson writes about the sense of certainty and particular illumination in the first lecture, and about the doctrine of our Lord's pre-existence in the third, would be the better for further clarification; and there is an important sentence about the Spirit and dynamic unity on p. 111 which, after repeated reading, I still do not think I understand. But one comes back, in any summation, to the power and competence of these lectures. Dr Hodgson set out bravely on a great task and never faltered. He has made it clear why the Christian orthodox doctrine of God is a Trinitarian doctrine, and what that means. That is no small achievement.

J. K. Mozley.

London.

The Pilgrim Continues his Way. Translated from the Russian by R. M. French. S.P.C.K. 3s. 6d.

Russian religion takes a deal of killing, and that realistically minded person Joseph Stalin, ex-seminarist and pupil of Lenin, seems to have decided that the attempt to kill it had better be abandoned. Part of the reason can be discerned in this charming little book, which reveals a piety so imperturbable in its childlike simplicity and depth that it might well survive the drums and tramplings of a thousand conquests.

The book is a continuation of *The Way of a Pilgrim*, which Mr French published in an English translation in 1930, not knowing at the time that any sequel existed. The Pilgrim, after a year's absence, revisits his friend and spiritual father and reports his wanderings and adventures. He brings with him a professor who wishes to enter a distant monastery. Other visitors arrive, and the second half of the book reports the party's discussion of prayer and the spiritual life.

The narrative section has a quaint and naïve quality that is wholly delightful. It contains passages dealing with prayer, especially with the "Jesus prayer" so dear to Russian Orthodox, but it is in the second

part that the assembled spiritual experts discourse at length upon the subject, with many references to the Scriptures and the holy fathers. Here, as Mr French notes, some things are said which sound strange in Western ears. Great stress is laid upon the need of unceasing prayer in the most literal sense: "God has assigned to the will and strength of man only the *quantity* of prayer. He has commanded unceasing prayer, always to pray, at all times and in every place. . . . Truly to pray means to direct the thought and the memory, without relaxing, to the recollection of God, to walk in His divine presence, to awaken oneself to His love by thinking about Him, and to link the Name of God with one's breathing and the beating of one's heart. The seeker is guided in all this by the invocation with the lips of the most Holy Name of Jesus Christ, or by saying the Jesus Prayer at all times and in all places and during every occupation, unceasingly." It is stoutly maintained that this ceaseless prayer is possible for all, however busy, and as stoutly denied that this almost mechanical and automatic use of the Jesus prayer is mere vain repetition. Again, in contrast to the many warnings given by Western spiritual guides, enjoyment and consolation in prayer are declared to be things we should desire and seek. The life of the hermit and the solitary is defended against charges, voiced by the professor, of self-deception and anti-social selfishness; though it is to be noted that the hermit who defends his mode of life stresses as strongly as any Counter-Reformation spiritual writer the need for a wise spiritual director.

The whole book is so refreshing and so full of the sense of joy in the presence of God and in communion with Him that it can be commended very heartily. Even those who would make reservations about its teaching will find themselves amply rewarded by this most lovable Pilgrim and his friends. Mr French has conferred a signal favour on English-speaking Christians by his translation of these golden little books.

H. Balmforth.

Ely.

Divine Judgment in Human History. By D. R. Davies. The Christian News-Letter Books, No. 18. Sheldon Press. 1s. 6d.

Mr Davies gives us here, in a slightly expanded form and with the addition of a fourth chapter, the substance of lectures delivered to the clergy of the York diocese in 1942. The decorous setting of a clerical assembly and of a Christian News-Letter publication has happily not interfered with his slashing phrases and his hard-hitting style. He combines always shrewd and often provocative thinking with an entertaining explosiveness of manner, as in this devastating reference to Mr H. G. Wells: "Wells's career as a thinker can be summed up by saying that the deeper the problem he tackles the more shallow becomes his solution, until at last he reaches the supreme idiocy of *You Can't be too Careful*." Laying about him in this way, he develops the thesis that divine judgment is not an occasional irruption into history, but that "the whole of history is a process of judgment." History is "the process by which the self-destructiveness which is in-

herent in human will is translated from inner being into social structure and institutions." The upshot is characteristically phrased: "History (*i.e.*, trying to live in defiance of God's will) is a mug's game."

The process of history is analyzed with the help of Toynbee's *Study of History*, and the maturing of the principle of self-destructiveness is seen in the breakdown of all civilizations through internal discord. The relevance of the Gospel to this situation is then considered. "The Gospel is, first of all, the interpretation of history as judgment." Contemporary man must be convinced of his own powerlessness to save himself, and "prophetic interpretation of events is the Church's greatest obligation to the Kingdom of God in every historical situation." The paradox of the Gospel is that it is Good News only if, first of all, it is Bad News—the bad news that men cannot save themselves in this age or in any other. And "anybody who is not a cretin can see that post-war Europe is going to be a seedbed of new possibilities of evil."

The concluding chapter urges the need for the Church to look ahead in her social witness and not merely to follow in the wake of historical development, demanding social changes only when everyone is agreed that they are necessary. Mr Davies believes that a completely planned economy in the fields of industry and commerce is unavoidable and urges that the Church must stand for restricting State and Corporation control in the realm of culture, fighting for as many private and group activities as possible in education and other cultural fields.

Those who are jarred by over-simplification will be uneasy with some of Mr Davies's handling of great and complicated historical issues, but this is a stimulating piece of work, and if the writer trails his coat by vehement and sweeping assertions, he keeps the discussion lively and communicates to it some of his own blazing conviction.

ELY. H. BALMFORTH

CHARLOTTE M. YONGE. By Georgina Battiscombe. Constable. 15s.

Mrs Battiscombe writes attractively of a very attractive character, the young lady who sat at Keble's feet and charmed Tractarian and Tory circles with *The Heir of Redcliffe*, *Heartsease*, *Dynevor Terrace*, and *The Daisy Chain*. In all these books the characters are "perfectly distinct and living," as Dean Church said at the time. They have the vitality of Trollope's, with a more enduring charm. After 1860 Charlotte wrote clumsily, often carelessly, and she wrote far too much. After Keble's death she sadly lacked critics who were in any sense her intellectual equals. Yet it seems to me that the best of her later work is far more distinctively her own than her earlier novels. In each of the successful novels of her middle period there is a unified, distinct pattern which marks it as a member of a unique family. It is this which Mrs Battiscombe misses; and it is this that makes Charlotte so interesting. She is an admirable illustration of exactly how far a clearly conceived dogmatic outlook, not only thought but lived with passionate integrity, will carry an author whose natural gifts are real, but limited. Mrs Battiscombe sees that religion was the whole of

Charlotte's life; but she does not realize how different her religion was, or rather became, from the religion of the Victorian age in general. As she grew up she grew out of her age. She found it harder to write, but she made an impact upon her age all the same. In *The Pillars of the House*, for instance, she made an enduring contribution to a permanent change in the idea of a gentleman. The odd thing is that among the many who read this and other books so few have commented on her originality, except Henry Sidgwick, who compared her to Flaubert, and George Saintsbury, whose moving tribute in *Nineteenth-Century Literature* has escaped Mrs Battiscombe's attention.

It was in 1859 or 1860 that the troubles of the Fulmort family, who tried to be squires on the profits of gin-palaces, and upset the nicely conceived pattern of *Hopes and Fears*, turned Charlotte on to her real task, an exploration of the meaning of aristocracy in an industrialized world; from that time on she constantly recurred to the same problems. Drains dominate *The Three Brides* and *The Young Stepmother*. They figure with a factory and a public-house in *My Young Alcides*, the most patterned of all Charlotte's books (the labours of Hercules in modern dress). In *The Pillars of the House* the perfect knight is found editing a provincial newspaper behind a counter in a bookshop in a drab pottery town. *Magnum Bonum* is concerned with the ethics of responsibility not only for landed property but for a scientific invention. The same kind of problems mingle humorously with that shrewd sketch of an early blue-stocking, *The Clever Woman of the Family*. Yet there is next to no preaching. If ever there is direct statement in Miss Yonge's books, it is by way of criticism of the causes she had most at heart. The substance of her message is always completely objectified.

As she grew more mature her work became more timeless. *The Dove in the Eagle's Nest* is not an historical novel (though *A Chaplet of Pearls* and *Unknown to History* are). It is a study of civilization's slow and difficult struggle with barbarism, and the Victorianisms are not an accident. The twins, whose sudden arrival in the world amuses Mrs Battiscombe, are essential to the pattern. Charlotte was never in bondage to the proprieties. She accepted them, and used them whenever there was no need to do anything else; but in *Love and Life*, her version of the legend of Cupid and Psyche, she could make the plot turn on a conspiracy which in real life would shock us even today. Yet the atmosphere of the book is radiantly chaste. She speaks "as concerning Christ and His Church." This seems to me the most carefully wrought work of her best period. It shows that in another age she would probably have deserted naturalism altogether. All her aptitudes were for fable, but, unfortunately, she was born in the nineteenth century.

Miss Hester Chapman, in a recent article in *The New Statesman*, seems to me to recognize this when she speaks of her world as mythical. It has much less to do with her period than appears at first sight. Unfortunately Miss Chapman dislikes it, and thinks it quite irrelevant to today or tomorrow, while I like it, and think it supremely relevant, but that is a difference of opinion outside literary criticism. Critically, I find it easier to agree with Miss Chapman than with Mrs Battiscombe.

But Mrs Battiscombe's biography of Charlotte, which incorporates most of the autobiographical material in Miss Coleridge's life, is very much more interesting and appreciative than that dull, patronizing book. It will, I am sure, attract many readers to the early novels, who will be so fascinated that they must go on to explore the later ones, even the rather wooden sequels which she wrote at the very end of her life, where she comments aghast at a change in Anglo-Catholic social opinion which she herself had unconsciously helped to create. The nephew of Felix Underwood, her squire and Tory journalist, turned out some kind of a radical socialist, working himself to death somewhere away in America to support his rascally Hungarian mother. So far have we travelled from the gentle romanticism of *The Heir of Redcliffe*.

Miss E. M. Delafield contributes a preface in which she displays her virtuosity as a collector of Yongeana: she declares that Charlotte never developed; the only self-portrait in her novels is the picture of an unruly girl in *Countess Kate*, and possibly Elizabeth in *Abbeychurch*. I fail to see any logical connexion between these two statements, both of which are untrue.

George Every, S.S.M.

Kelham.

The Tree of Life. By H. J. Massingham. Chapman and Hall. 8s. 6d.

"There is no doubt that a rejuvenated Church, preaching Christianity in relation to nature, is cardinal to that rural civilization the building of which many regard as the supreme task of the future." So wrote Mr Rolf Gardiner in his contribution to *England and the Farmer*, and in thus demanding the assistance of the Church in the revival of rural life he is not alone. Mr Montague Fordham has for many years said much the same thing, and the attention which the Malvern Conference paid to agriculture delighted him. Lady Eve Balfour, in the last chapter of her excellent book *The Living Soil*, lifts the argument for humus agriculture from the biological level to that of Christian service. And now comes Mr Massingham, perhaps the most learned and persuasive of them all, to write in his latest book of an English tradition which is both rural and Christian, and to examine the relation between Christianity and the love of the land.

It is plain enough that many saints and authors have been Christians and lovers of nature, and that their lives and literary work were the expression of a traditional view of life which they shared with many simpler and unlettered folk such as craftsmen and peasants. Mr Massingham is at his best when writing of this tradition. He finds it in the love of wild nature which marked the lives of the Irish saints: "St Kevin would not move his outstretched hand in prayer until a blackbird that had nested on his palm had hatched her young" (p. 38). He traces it throughout the Middle Ages, and finds its full flowering in the English literature of the first half of the seventeenth century. After that period, the right attitude towards God and nature was gradually lost, and the slow extinction of this rural and Christian tradition is the tragedy of England.

But Mr Massingham is anxious to do more than point to this tradition; he strives to show that the combination of its two elements is necessary. He believes that Christianity consecrates the love of the land, and he therefore enters the province of theology. He extracts from the Gospels a picture of the idealized Peasant-Craftsman. Certainly Christ's revelation of God was made in an agricultural setting; but this portrait of the Rural Christ will not do. It is as much a piece of special pleading as the Christ of liberal humanism, and perhaps Sir Edwyn Hoskyns, who was deeply interested in country ways, would have called it fudge. Mr Massingham's exposition of the Doctrine of Creation is also open to exception. There is certainly a right and a wrong way of doing things, both in the field and in the workshop. But there is a good deal wrong in the fields and in the men who work there, which no human power can put right, and should the Church consecrate it? Can the Church consecrate any way of life, even the rural tradition, without forgetting God's judgment, and making redemption without meaning? The Christian man may love his countryside and its work and its ways, but he dare not ask the Church to consecrate them, for they are not without sin and evil. The Church may consecrate too much.

A. C. Scupholme.

Ugthorpe.

The Pilgrim's Regress. By C. S. Lewis. Geoffrey Bles. 8s. 6d.

The Pilgrim's Regress, first published in 1933, has been reissued with a preface by Mr Lewis. It is not apologetics but an allegorical account of the stages of Mr Lewis's conversion to Christianity. Let the story explain itself:

John, a young man, born in Puritania, is given a romantic experience, a vision of a beautiful Island, after which nothing will satisfy him but that he should seek the Island. He tries first of all to find it in Sensual Pleasure, but this fails. He visits the town of Æsthetic Pleasure, and then the land of the Modern Age. He is imprisoned in a dungeon of Freudian nightmares, until he is rescued by Reason. Then he is joined by Vertue, or the conscience, and together they go along the road until they reach the chasm which is the result of the Fall. Mother Kirk is there, but they refuse her help and go north, to the land of the materialists. They visit Mr Sensible, the epicurean, and Humanist, Classical, and Angular, the dogmatist, a queer trio whose main point in common seems to be that Mr Lewis dislikes them all. Further north live the submen and the Nihilists. Having failed to find a crossing they turn south, where live Theosophists, Gnostics, Magicians, etc. Here John meets Wisdom and is converted to Pantheism. But Pantheism, he finds, is no philosophy to live by, and in his struggle to cross the chasm he becomes a Theist. Finally he accepts the gift of Grace, becomes a Christian and is helped by Mother Kirk. Then, after another glimpse of the Island, he returns to where he started, but this time he sees the people he has met as they really are, not as they pretend to be.

All this is as brilliant as we expect from Mr Lewis, though it has certain prejudices, and the lay-out of the land is at times rather ob-

scure. But it is often wise, still more often witty, and always tremendously entertaining.

Since Mr Lewis had been so successful in introducing Christian dogma to the common reader, it may be valuable to consider the means he uses—at any rate in his fictional books. Mr Lewis differentiates between allegory, which appeals to the intellect, and myth, which appeals to the imagination. The allegory of *The Pilgrim's Regress* takes its form from Bunyan and to a lesser extent from Spenser, and is very skilful indeed. The myth, however, the story of John's romantic vision of the Island, lacks the same driving power. The average reader will appreciate the vicissitudes of John's journey, but he will find it hard to see why he should have set off at all. The problem of the relation of allegory and myth is always present in works of this kind. In *Screwtape* Mr Lewis ignored myth and wrote entirely on the level of allegory, and so produced his most triumphant success. In *Perelandria* he took over the Wellsian myth of inter-planetary travel—a gorgeous and daring experiment which did not quite come off because one felt that he did not believe in it himself. Nevertheless, there was poetic imagination as well as wit (remember the delightful bubbletrees and the friendly dragons), and I wait with eagerness to see how next Mr Lewis will tackle the problem, of which, of course, no one is more aware than he.

NORMAN NICHOLSON.

MILLOM.

THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY. By Shirley Jackson Case. University of Chicago Press. Chicago, 1943. Price not indicated.

After reading this book with growing impatience, I can only conclude that the editor's object in asking me to review it was to subject me to religious discipline. After a due period of quiet reflection, I can only say that, in my honest opinion, this book is a calamity, and to dignify it by the term "Christian Philosophy of History" is a caricature. It is a book which could easily be sponsored by the Rationalist Press Association. Let me give a few instances to show the level on which it is written.

"Christians have been accustomed to treat too lightly the problem of eradicating evil from the human scene. To eliminate evil we needed, so we supposed, only to nullify the effects of Adam's fall. But modern knowledge of the origins of the natural man has set the whole problem in a new framework. . . . Now we know that the natural impulses of men stem from a brutish ancestry . . . perhaps from a Neanderthal man" (p. 213). Dr Case hasn't shifted from the shallow analysis and delusions of the romantic eighteenth century. "It is fortunate, indeed, that we have eons of time . . ." (p. 213). Boiled down to a sentence, what the author calls Christian philosophy of history is the Liberal view at its shallowest level—history is already a process of evolution, by gradual stages, towards the Kingdom of God, which will be achieved at long last. Everything points to just that rosy objective. "History to date is also reassuring" (p. 215). It "teaches us that God has chosen to work through the instrumentality of good

men *to effect the eradication of evil*" (p. 215. My italics.—D. R. D.), etc., *ad nauseam*. If this is Christian, the New Testament most certainly is not.

What is also deplorable in this book is the smooth, slick, superficial way in which Dr Case summarizes ideas and systems with which he disagrees. His summary of Kierkegaard, Barth and the rest of the "dialectical" school is ludicrous in its misrepresentation, its complete lack of insight. He dismisses Berdyaev and Tillich by saying that their philosophy is simply a reflection of their sad personal experience of suffering and persecution (*vide* pp. 102-10). Dr Case seems to be utterly oblivious to the suspicion that American technics and optimism may have something to do with his naïve interpretation of history. He labours under the delusion that he is completely objective in his view of history (*vide* p. vi). And what is one to say about a book published in 1943, professing to discuss the problem of a philosophy of history, that never once even mentions Arnold Toynbee, whose *Study of History* introduces a new epoch in philosophizing about history?

No! It won't do. Some books are too good to be true. This one is too bad to be true.

D. R. Davies.

Hull.

SHORTER NOTICES

China Among the Nations. By H. R. Williamson. S.C.M. Press. 6s.

Dr Williamson, in this little book of 125 pages, has condensed the experience of thirty years' life in China and much study of China both past and present. The extent of his achievement in producing such a balanced and readable account cannot easily be over-estimated, and anyone who wants a short introduction to China could not do better than read it.

Those who know and love China have become rather tired of all the fulsome and often patronizing praise which is showered upon her as a substitute for any recognition of the immense debt we owe to her. The Chinese are not, and never have been, all angels, and Dr Williamson does not pretend that they are or have been. His praise is healthy; but in a book entitled *China Among the Nations* more might have been said of our debt to China in this war. He mentions that the Chinese are "bogging down" about one and a half million Japanese troops in China; but beyond this the Chinese have, during six years, inflicted heavy losses on the Japanese at even greater cost to themselves. When I left China after the first six months of the Sino-Japanese conflict my Chinese friends said to me rather wistfully: "Try to make your people at home realize that the Second World-War has started, and that we are fighting for them and for the world, not only for our own country." That was in 1937. The whole of the Axis timetable in the East was thrown hopelessly out of gear, by the "China Incident" proving such a tough proposition. We owe to China's stubborn resistance the lives of thousands of our kith and kin; for Japan's plan for the conquest of India, Australia and New Zealand was hamstrung

before the attack started, by China's long years of bitter struggle. We owe it to China, partly, that we escaped invasion and escaped an even more devastating bombing than actually occurred. Had it not been for China's persistence we might, in the dark days, have had to deploy larger sea, land, and air forces than we did, to prevent a union of the Eastern and Western Axis Powers, with a consequent solution of their supply problem. This is a debt of blood, of which most people in this country remain ignorant. Apart from the absence of a sufficient stress on the importance of this debt, Dr Williamson's book seems to me beyond praise. He deals interestingly with China's history and philosophy, and gives an excellent account of her struggle in the present war, and of the part Christianity has played in both of these.

CHIDDINGFOLD. MICHAEL BRUCE.

LIFE AFTER THE SPIRIT. By M. Chaning-Pearce. Reprinted from *The Nineteenth Century and After*. THEOLOGY Occasional Papers, No. 6. S.P.C.K. 1s.

It may be thankfully regarded as an encouraging sign of the times that a paper bearing such a title should find place in a secular periodical of first-class quality and deserved reputation. The more so when its contents are seen to constitute a vigorous attack on all that is humanist, and are supported by a wealth of quotations from the New Testament, reinforced by others from a wide variety of Christian sages and seers, all bearing witness to the fact that Spirit is transcendent—a gift from on high—informing, but not evolving from, the raw material of soul or consciousness. Niebuhr, Law, Ruysbroek, St John of the Cross, to name only a few, are laid under contribution to the writer's thesis; he finds corroboration for it even in the greatest exponent of modern psychology, quoting Jung's dictum that "Spirit was never a human activity, much less a function"; he ranges farther afield, outside the fold of Christendom, for similar witness to the same truth, and finds it in the Upanishads, in a Moslem Sufi, in the Golden Flower of Chinese Buddhism, and adds thereto this comment: "It is here, in this conception of Spirit-Being, that East and West most really and profoundly meet; the creed of the Divine Spirit is more catholic than Christianity has ever been." But it is from Kierkegaard, "the Dead Man of Denmark," that he draws—as from the utterance of one risen from the dead—the most trenchant testimony of all. These stark sentences do indeed strike upon the eye with a light that dazzles; and when they are reinforced, as they are here, by other such from the pen of a modern thinker of a totally different calibre of mind, Berdyaev, the cumulative effect is overwhelming. Nor are the writer's own words less convincing—such as these: "The visitation of the Spirit is catastrophic; it is that of a celestial vigour striking down and athwart the rhythm of natural life."

HAWARDEN. GEORGE SEAVER.

CHRISTIAN YOUTH WORK AND THE FUTURE. Youth Department of the British Council of Churches. 6d.

It is difficult to bring any adverse criticism against this pamphlet, although from the religious standpoint there are undoubtedly a few

who will regard it as a compromise. It is certainly realistic in that it faces the fact that, whether the Church wills it or not, the vast majority of children of this country are receiving their education in State schools, and that the life of young people to an increasing extent will be controlled by the State up to the age of twenty-one. What attitude is the Christian youth leader to adopt? The pamphlet urges that that attitude ought to be no longer one of negative aloofness, which has been all too often apparent in the Church in the past, but that Christian men and women equipped with conviction and knowledge may find their vocation in co-operation with the State in a task which confronts both. Nor is this task sentimentalized, for Section (3) recalls some of the difficulties which must be faced—viz., apathy, indifference, "hostile home environment," and the conditions of industry.

There remains one point for comment, and that a warning, which issues from the very nature of youth even at its best—its instability and its immaturity. Those who would undertake this work must look for no immediate results; often they must ask with the prophet, "Lord, how long?", and the answer may well be that vouchsafed to Isaiah.

EDUCATIONAL REFORM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE. Christian Education Movement. 4d.

This brief pamphlet must be read, as those who have produced it suggest, alongside the White Paper, for it devotes its primary comments to a condemnation of some of the defects of our present educational system which the White Paper proposes to remedy. The important phrase "equality of opportunity" is then discussed, but with no reference to the home conditions of the child, which, in a day school particularly, may well make equality of opportunity of no effect. The concluding section makes it clear that it is on Christian grounds alone that such equality may be claimed, for it is only in the sight of God that all men are equal. Finally the recognition of the corner stone of all educational reform must be borne in mind—viz., the teacher—although nothing is said of the urgent reformation needed in the training of that profession.

WREXHAM. M. S. DAWSON.

BOOKS RECEIVED

(Mention here neither implies nor precludes subsequent comment.)

BATSFORD: *A Batsford Century* (10s. 6d.).
BLACKFRIARS: St Thomas Aquinas, *On the Manifestation of the Divine Knowledge* (9d.); *Vincent McNabb* (1s. 6d.).
GEOFFREY BLES: Jacques Maritain, *Redeeming the Time* (12s. 6d.).
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS: S. Morison, *English Prayer Books* (6s.).
CHATTO AND WINDUS: F. R. Leavis, *Education and the University* (6s.).
CLARENDON PRESS: E. F. Jacob, *The Register of Henry Chichele* (15s.).
C. OF E. YOUTH COUNCIL: *Notes for Cadet Chaplains* (1s.).
COUNCIL OF CLERGY AND MINISTERS FOR COMMON OWNERSHIP: S. G. Evans, *Christians in the World Struggle* (3d.).
JOHN CROWTHER (Bognor Regis): Bob Major, *Bells of the Isle* (5s.).